

# Central Kansas **BUSINESS JOURNAL**

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March 2006

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*An interview with Missy  
Pflughoeft (right), operator of  
Country Place in Ellinwood*



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**Q & A**

# A place like home

## Country Place fosters peace of mind for residents and their families

By DALE HOGG  
 dhogg@gbtribune.com

ELLINWOOD - Ellinwood, like many smaller communities, is graying. As this population gets older, the need for services for the elderly grows greater.

For the past year and a half, Country Place in Ellinwood has helped meet this increased demand by offering a home-like environment for its senior residents. "We truly strive to enhance our residents' independence, privacy, individuality, dignity, and security," said Missy Pflughoeft, operator of Country Place.

Pflughoeft has been with the facility almost from the beginning and sees the pleasures of small-town living, pleasures she wants to make sure her clients find in their experience at Country Place. She took time recently to reflect on her profession.

**Tell us a little about yourself and history in Ellinwood, and background in the senior care business.**

My father Larry Zimmer and his wife Bobby Zimmer have



**Missy Pflughoeft**

lived in Ellinwood since 1987. I moved to Ellinwood in May of 1994. I married my husband, Brian Pflughoeft, a native of Ellinwood, on Sept. 13, 1997. We have three children, Brittany, Zakary, and Cassidy. I have been working with the elderly population for the last 12 years. I became certified as

a nurse aide and home health aide in 1994. I have a background in activities, recreational therapy, rehab, and marketing. In 2004 I became certified as a medication aide and received my adult care home operator certification. I have been employed with Country Place almost two years now. I enjoy working with the public and love people.

**Give a brief history of Country Place.**

The beginning work of preparing the site was done in January of 2004. On March 25, 2004, the living structure itself was brought in to Ellinwood by Wardcraft Homes of Clay Center. May 25, 2004 Country Place Senior Living received licensing through the State of Kansas and was officially open to the public June 1, 2004. On Aug. 1, 2004 the first resident moved in.

**Country Place has earned numerous awards. To what do you owe your success?**

Our goal is to foster peace of

COUNTRY PLACE  
 continued on 3

## COUNTRY PLACE continued from page 2

mind for our residents and their loved ones and to provide a secure and supportive home-like environment.

### What is your philosophy on dealing with your residents?

We understand how difficult it is to leave home or to go through changes in this stage of life. We truly strive to enhance our residents' independence, privacy, individuality, dignity, and security.

### Health care has become a very competitive business. What do you offer residents to make Country Place stand out?

Country Place is unique in many ways. Our residence accommodates a maximum of only eight seniors. The environment is a ranch-style home; a loving and caring home-like environment much

like the one residents are used to living in. Our caring licensed and certified staff is available 24 hours a day providing home cooked meals, medication assistance, assistance with bathing, dressing, grooming, activities, house-keeping, and laundry. As the operator of Country Place, I am truly proud of my staff and the care and love they show our residents. I am also especially thankful for the support and care of the dedicated local owners of Country Place. I truly love all the residents and families of Country Place and I am thankful for the ways I have been touched by them.

### What is the biggest challenge facing a business like yours in a smaller community? Is this problem new?

Our challenge is to continually find ways to enhance the services that we provide by making each experience at

Country Place the best possible for seniors and their families. As the operator of Country Place I feel one of the challenges is to educate the public about our services. Country Place is licensed as Home Plus, a specially designed combination of housing, personalized assistance, supportive services and health care designed to respond to the individual needs of those who need help with activities of daily living. These services make a small community an asset rather than a challenge because people want to feel at home.

### What is the future for small-town senior care?

Our community, like many other small population communities, are aging, this makes the need for adult care homes greater. As more seniors become aware of the quality of life they can enjoy in

their home towns there will be an increased demand for these services.

### How many people do you employ?

We currently employ 12 wonderful employees.

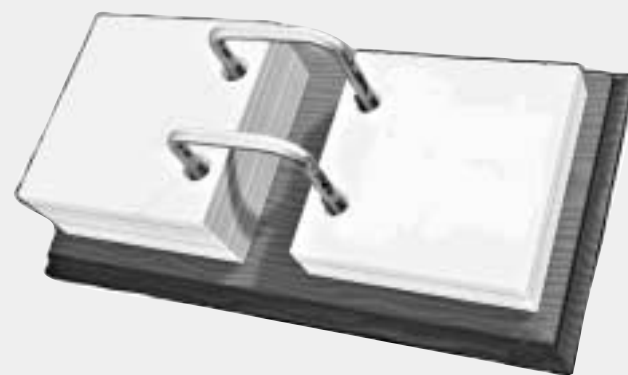
### In addition to being in senior care, you are active in the community. What all do you do and how important is this to you?

I stay very involved in the community in many ways. Being the operator of Country Place, my husband working for the railroad as a conductor/engineer and having three children keeps me very busy. I spend my free time devoted to my children's activities and sports and my family. My husband Brian and I are members of the Ellinwood United Methodist Church, where our children attend Sunday school and I teach the youth.

# On the Calendar

## Great Bend Chamber of Commerce

1307 Williams, Great Bend, KS 67530 620-792-2401



**March 1-31** — BCCC Foundation's academic enrichment fund campaign  
**March 5** — 10th Annual jazz festival, Great Bend Community Theatre, 7:30 p.m.  
**March 5-28** — Barton County High School juried art exhibition, BCCC Shafer Art Gallery, opening reception from 1-4 p.m.  
**March 6** — Ourselves & Our Family spaghetti dinner, GBHS, 5-7 p.m.  
 BCCC Red Cross bloodmobile, Kirkman student activity center, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
**March 7** — Back Room Concert, Karen Abrahams, Barton Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.  
 Downtown Development board meeting, Lizzie's Cottage, 8 p.m.  
**March 8** — Beautification committee meeting, Chamber conference room, 1:30 p.m.  
**March 9** — Coffee: Nex-Tech Wireless,

9:30 a.m.  
 Kiwanis pancake feed, Expo 1 complex, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**March 9-11** — BCCC Spring musical, "Cinderella," BCCC Fine Arts auditorium, 7:30 p.m.  
**March 10** — Back Room concert, Michael Young, Barton Arts Center, 8 p.m.  
**March 11** — Pheasant's Forever Banquet, Highland Hotel & Convention Center, social hour begins at 5:30 p.m.  
**March 16** — Coffee: Barton County Farm Bureau, 9:30 a.m.  
 Leadership Great Bend, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
 Presbyterian Church Men's Irish Stew, 24th & Washington, 4:30-7 p.m.  
 BCCC choral concert, Fine Arts auditorium, 7:30 p.m.  
**March 20-24** — Spring Break, USD 428 & BCCC

**March 21** — BCCC Board of Trustees meeting, Student Union, 4 p.m.  
**March 23** — Coffee: Pathways ResCare, 9:30 a.m.  
**March 24** — Golden Belt Community Concert Association, Cristiana Pegoraro, city auditorium, 7:30 p.m.  
**March 25** — Bulls Gone Wild, 6:30 p.m.  
 Legislative Coffee, Oil & Gas museum, 10 a.m.  
**March 25-26** — Spring Expo, Expo Complex  
 Saturday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**March 27** — Leadership Great Bend, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
**March 30** — Coffee: Great Bend Public Library, 9:30 a.m.

## ▼ SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS

# Sounding the All-Clear for Small-Business Health Plans

A few days ago, a security alarm in a U.S. Senate building sent senators scurrying for safety. Fortunately, it was a false alarm and soon the all-clear sign was given. But the incident brought to mind other Capitol Hill alarms that have long been warning lawmakers of a dangerous threat to the health and safety of millions of Americans. Yet these pleas have gone almost unheeded.

For years, America's small businesses have been signaling that uncontrollable health insurance costs are bearing down on them like a runaway freight train. They've warned that a collision is inevitable because the nation's health insurance system has them tied fast to a system that leaves few options for escape.

Amazingly, the House of Representatives is so attuned to the emergency that it has tried to clear the path. The House has passed legislation eight times authorizing Small-Business Health Plans (SBHPs) to operate across state lines to offer small firms the opportunity to band together through bona fide trade and professional associations to purchase affordable health benefits. By participating in a SBHP, small-business owners take advantage of the group's bargaining power, economies of scale and administrative efficiencies.

Unfortunately, on the Senate side of Capitol Hill, even though several free-enterprise-friendly senators have attempted to bring the issue up for consideration, no action has been taken to prevent the crash. But now, clear evidence is ringing out with a sound more akin to the clanging of a slot machine that's just hit the jackpot. It's heralding the arrival of conclusive evidence that SBHPs can truly be a cash-saving solution.

Virtually all familiar with the health insurance cost explosion know that one sure way to reduce the bounding rise of premiums is to reduce the costs of administering health insurance plans. All those accounting services, audits, case management tasks and enrollment functions quickly add up.

But a new study by the National Federation of Independent Business Research Foundation clearly points the way to a viable healthcare solution. Researchers examining SBHPs analyzed factors such as administrative costs and functions and the plan executives' analysis of their plans compared to other traditional plans. The research also looked at the competitive dynamics of the health insurance market.



**Jack Faris is president of NFIB (the national Federation of Independent Business), the nation's largest small-business advocacy group. A non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1943.**

**NFIB represents the consensus views of its 600,000 members in Washington, D.C. and all 50 state capitals. More information is available on-line at [www.NFIB.com](http://www.NFIB.com)**

Researchers found that SBHPs were significantly less costly than traditional health-management or preferred-provided organizations—14 percent less costly, in fact—because the SBHPs achieved lower administrative costs due to skillful combination of in-sourcing and out-sourcing practices.

Participants in SBHPs chose to in-source sales and marketing functions and out-source others, such as accounting, case management and claims adjudication. The effective management of the administrative functions of health insurance allows SBHPs to keep costs to a minimum for employers and their employees.

This research sounds an all-clear signal for the U.S. Senate to get to work to pass legislation to authorize these efficient and cost-effective plans to function nationwide. Doing so will give small businesses an affordable opportunity to offer health coverage to employees, in addition to improving the overall health care market by introducing new competition.

## Larned Chamber of Commerce

502 Broadway, Larned, KS. 67550 620-285-6916

**March 5** - United States Army Jazz Band performance, Larned Middle School, 3 p.m.

**March 6** - Pawnee County Commissioners meeting  
Congressman Jerry Moran visits Larned

Larned City Council meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**March 9** - Pawnee County Economic Development Commission meeting, Jordaan Community Room, noon

**March 10, 11 & 12** - 36th Annual Antique Show & Sale, National Guard Armory

**March 13** - Pawnee County Commissioners meeting

**March 14** - Larned Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting, Jordaan Community Room, 11:45 a.m.

Burdett City Council meeting, 8:00 p.m.

**March 16** - Chamber coffee hour hosted by Larned Middle School Tech YES Program, at the Larned Middle School, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**March 20 - 24** - USD 495 Spring Break

**March 23** - Chamber Coffee Hour hosted by Nex-Tech Wireless, at Dennis Wilson Auto Center, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**March 27** - Chamber Coffee Hour hosted by USD 495, 10:30 a.m.

**March 28** - Pawnee County Economic Development Commission hosts fourth Grade Ag Day, Pawnee County Fairgrounds

## Hoisington Chamber of Commerce

123 N. Main, Hoisington, KS. 67544 620-653-4311

**March 9** - Koffee Klatsch, City of Hoisington, City Building, 9:30 a.m.

**March 11** - Casino Night, Knights of Columbus, 7 p.m.

**March 16** - Koffee Klatsch, Worth Heating &

Electric, chamber office, 9:30 a.m.

**March 23** - Koffee Klatsch, Great Bend Tribune, Chamber Office, 9:30 a.m.

**March 30** - Koffee Klatsch, Pizza Hut, 9:30 a.m.

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**Professional Profile**

# New family care doctor drawn to Great Bend

By **CHUCK SMITH**  
*csmith@gbtribune.com*

Growing up on his parents' farm near Sublette, Dr. Brad Smith knew he was drawn to the medical field, even though he was pretty sure he wanted to treat people instead of farm animals.


He got plenty of veterinary experience helping his father around the farm, but by the time he left for his undergraduate work at the University of Kansas, he was interested in treating people, and he's still happy with the choice he made.

Smith is the most recent addition to St. Joseph Family Medicine, 3520 Lakin, and he is still accepting new patients, he said. "We can usually get them in the same day, too."

After gaining his undergraduate degree from KU, Smith earned his medical degree from University of Health Sciences in Kansas City, Mo., and was trained at Southern Colorado Family Medicine, in Pueblo, Colo.

Smith's wife, Catherine, is from Pueblo and when it came time for them to pick a spot for him to practice, they agreed they wanted a

**Dr. Brad Smith**



**Occupation:** Family practice  
**Business:** St. Joseph Family Medicine  
**Great Bend location:** 3520 Lakin  
**Phone:** 792-3345

smaller community where they were comfortable starting a family. Great Bend fit

the bill, he said. They looked at a lot of different communities but were

impressed with what the local community had to offer, the lifestyle and also the relationships they found in the hospital community.

Working in family medicine in a smaller town also gives Smith the chance to actually get to know his patients, instead of just running them through.

Besides family practice, Smith is also interested in sports medicine, helping young people develop in healthy ways and helping them learn the benefits of healthy exercise throughout their lives.

Another area of interest for Smith is in dermatology. Due to changes in equipment and techniques, there are a lot of treatments that can be done locally now, which would have required the patient to travel to other facilities in the past, Smith explained.

In addition to medicine, Smith is interested in various outdoor activities, as his attraction to sports medicine might indicate.

He is an avid angler and is looking for local opportunities to keep his hand in fly fishing, he said.

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Cover Story

# Coming together

## Positive attitude draws Larned residents together



TERRY SPRADLEY/ Great Bend Tribune

The American State Bank and Trust occupies the building that first served Larned as a train station, a bus station and various restaurants. It is typical of many buildings in town that have been revitalized to serve different roles in the community.

TERRY SPRADLEY/ Great Bend Tribune

Looking north on Broadway the activity through Larned's downtown shows a community with an aggressive attitude towards marketing and promotion.



By DALE HOGG  
dhogg@gbttribune.com

LARNED – From the intersection of U.S. 56 highway and Broadway in Larned, one can look in any direction and see a community on the move. From the convenience stores to the eating establishments to the other businesses, the community belies its true size.

In fact, the positive attitude of the Pawnee County seat's 2,300 folks belie the community's small-town status. Why? Civic leaders say they've come together and leaned they have to rely on one another to survive.

"There is really a strong family feel here," said Suzan Haynes, president of the Larned Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

Haynes cited the State Theater, a community-operated movie theater in down-

town Larned that has been in operation for a few years now, as an example. Residents pitched in, made the project happen and volunteer to run it.

In fact, they will wait for films to be shown at the State. "The people feel ownership with it," Haynes said.

"This has changed the people's prospective. They realized just how important their community was to them. It brought us closer together."

This feeling spills over into economic landscape.

"Things are going well. We're planning for the future," said Linda Henderson, chamber of commerce director. "People here understand that in this community we have a lot of opportunities brought our way and they take advantage of that."

Larned has new businesses coming in, more on the way, as well as several

long-established shops, and new housing is being built. What's more, the community has as a resource the Larned State Hospital complex which employs over 3,000 people. "These all are signs of progress."

What's more, the hospital is in the process of expanding.

This is a double-edged sword for Larned and western communities like it. It creates a shortage of workers. "This is something that is a regional dilemma," Henderson said.

Economic development officials in western Kansas are looking at ways to attract more manpower. "We want to encourage people to take a look at us and our quality of life," Henderson said.

"We have jobs," she said. They just have to get out the message.

Even as Larned moves to the future, it

is keenly aware of its past. The Fort Larned National Historic Site and Santa Fe Trail Center just west of town showcase the Indian Wars and pioneer history of the area.

"The community has capitalized on its rich Santa Fe Trail history," said Ruth Olsen Peters, trail center director. Over Memorial Day weekend each year, Larned holds its Santa Fe Trail Days.

"We have wonderful community support," she said of the historic sites and the celebration, which is sponsored by the chamber.

Beyond the local involvement, Peters said tourism also plays an important role. "We do bring an economic impact to the community." The thousands of visitors who see the fort and the center stop, eat and spend the night in the area.

"There are a lot of opportunities here," Henderson said.



TERRY SPRADLEY/ Great Bend Tribune

Serving the needs of their customers and community is the reason Deric and Tia Schmidt, owners of the Dairy Queen, give as they close their doors on Mar. 10 to convert the business to Buckboard Bar-B-Q in early April. "We are very excited to be bringing something new to the community," Schmidt said.

TERRY SPRADLEY/ Great Bend Tribune



Central States Scout Museum, located at 815 Broadway, is only one of several attractions Larned offers visitors and history buffs. The Santa Fe Trail Museum and Fort Larned, located west of town, provide visitors ample opportunity to explore the past.



TERRY SPRADLEY/ Great Bend Tribune

The Chamber of Commerce recently underwent a face lift and interior renovation to include a new tourist information center providing visitors and prospective residents alike a place for information on Larned and the surrounding area. The center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



TERRY SPRADLEY/ Great Bend Tribune

The State Theater is only one example of a community working together through volunteerism. The theater shows current Hollywood hits as well as special-interest features like the Christian-based movie "The End of the Spear" currently playing.

## Professional Profile

# Kari Smith: A Golden Belt success story

By SUSANTHACKER

sthacker@gtribune.com

Kari Smith started working at The Buckle in Great Bend when she was 15 years old. Today, Smith is vice president of sales for the company. But while most of the company's corporate officers work at the Kearney, Neb., headquarters, Smith continues to make Great Bend her home.

Growing up in St. John, Smith wasn't looking for a career when she took a part-time job at The Buckle in 1978.

"I started here to get the discount, to get a chance to meet boys, and definitely to buy the clothes," Smith said. "It just turned into something I'm passionate about."

Smith took some business courses at Barton County Community College and was involved in the college marketing club, DECA. She planned to graduate from Barton and go on to the University of Kansas or K-State, but it turned out her on-the-job experience was all she'd need. She went from part-time to full-time at The Buckle, becoming store manager in the early 1980s.

She advanced from store manager to area manager to district manager and the regional manager. About five years ago, she was named one of the company's vice presidents of sales.

### Kari Smith



**Occupation:** Vice president of sales

**Business:** Buckle clothing stores

**Great Bend location:** 1313 Main Street

**Phone:** 793-9338

Many former employees from The Buckle in Great Bend have moved on to become store managers, or even district or area managers, Smith said. She is unique in that she has risen in the corporation while remaining in Great Bend. She and husband Craig Smith

have two sons, 18-year-old Jace and 13-year-old Cole, with lots of relatives nearby on both sides of the family.

She spends roughly two to three weeks out of each month traveling to managers' meetings or one of The Buckle's 350 stores nationwide. Another 15 to 20 stores open each year, on average.

To spend that much time away from home, Smith said, "you have to enjoy the work and feel that you make a difference."

Aside from her work, Smith is involved in her church and her family — both of her sons are active in sports.

"It would be hard to leave Great Bend," Smith said. "The people in Great Bend helped me become successful. We have so many loyal customers. I wouldn't be where I am if they hadn't helped support the business."

Smith's job responsibilities include getting new stores open, providing sales and management training, and looking over visual merchandising/product placement to create a unified look throughout the company.

"But my No. 1 job is recruiting talent and developing talent," she said. It is this interacting with people that makes Smith love her job.

"I like impacting and influencing young people's lives," she said. "I really enjoy it. I get to work with amazing people."

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## Business Profile

# Hoisington Floral offers full floral and gift services

By PAM MARTIN

[pmartin@gbtribune.com](mailto:pmartin@gbtribune.com)

HOISINGTON — Hoisington Floral has been a downtown Hoisington landmark for over 25 years and Loretta Finger has been at the helm of the business for nearly 20 of those years.

Finger had been in charge of the flowers at church when the owner of Hoisington Floral at that time asked her to come work for him.

"That was about 25 years ago," Finger said.

She learned floral arranging from the shop's former owner and attended a lot of workshops and shows throughout Kansas. Finger attended a show in February.

Hoisington Floral offers ready-made and custom floral arrangements, plants and silk arrangements for weddings, funerals and everyday occasions.

"I do a lot of proms, anniversaries, church work and reunions," she said.

Orders can start coming in as early as 6 a.m. Normally, Finger arrives at 7 a.m. to begin taking orders and making arrangements. The florist stays open until 5:30 p.m. most days.

Finger is also a Telefloral and FTD florist and provides delivery to all surrounding towns. The Clara Barton Hospital Auxiliary helps out during all major holidays. It's a symbiotic relationship — the auxiliary earns funds for their

### Hoisington Floral



**Location:** 122 N. Main, Hoisington

**Phone:** (620) 653-4668

**Hours:** 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday  
7 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday

projects and Finger receives good help in getting arrangements delivered.

Hoisington Floral has also promoted "Good Neighbor Day." Soon after Labor Day, businesses and individuals make donations for the purchase of roses. Finger orders

the roses, cleans, hydrates and cools them. "It's an all-afternoon affair," she said.

People can purchase the roses at a very reasonable price, keep one rose for themselves and give the rest away.

"We prepared over 5,000 last year," Finger said.

Hoisington Floral carries a large selection of gifts, including stuffed animals, some of which are musical; Red Hat Club supplies; figurines; and all-occasion balloons. Finger has the front of the store filled with displays, which she enjoys arranging.

**Send your business news and announcements to the Great Bend Tribune Business Journal editor Stacy Bronson [sbronson@gbtribune.com](mailto:sbronson@gbtribune.com)**

The Business Journal will be published the first Sunday of every month.  
Copy deadline is ten days prior to publication

# Bowers becomes Certified Quickbooks ProAdvisor

Great Bend certified public accountant Barry J. Bowers has passed Intuit's QuickBooks Certification coursework and

become a Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor. The official QuickBooks certification program tests in-depth knowledge of QuickBooks and its business management solutions.



Barry J. Bowers

To become a Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor, Bowers completed three interactive self-study on-line courses and passed on-line tests with a minimum of 85 percent proficiency. The required coursework included setting up clients, essential for the accountant, and recording transactions. He plans to complete annual update courses to gain knowledge on the latest version of QuickBooks.

Bowers helps QuickBooks customers get the most out of the small business accounting and management software. The services offered to QuickBooks users include:

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Community Bank of the Midwest presents

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**MARCH 27, 7:00 PM**

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Fine Arts Auditorium

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to BCCC sign, then East on NE 30 Road to Campus

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### FEATURED SPEAKER



Larry Acker

Larry Acker is a guest on numerous syndicated radio programs around the U.S. and is a speaker for many professional groups nationwide including the American Soybean Association, National Association of Farm Broadcasters and the Foundation for the Study of Cycles. Larry is also a panelist and a commentator of crop reports for the Chicago Board of Trade and has been running a successful hotline that updates for both Commodities and Weather since May 1993. He became an official observer in Northwestern Illinois for the U.S. Weather Service in June 1995 and records observations and transmits them to the National Weather Service (N.W.S.).

Currently, Larry is doing cycle studies related to weather such as volcanic, diseases, insect, political and war cycles that affect national and global economies. Larry returns to Great Bend to enlighten us on what will take place in our area in the upcoming months. Some specific topics Larry will bring to the table are as follows:

### TOPICS

- Energy
- How the war cycles combined with weather will affect change in our area
- Pricing and marketing opportunities for Grains, Livestock, Oil and Gas and various other commodities
- Shift in crop production in warmer climate Countries and the effect on World Market
- Silver, gold
- Soybean rust
- Wheat as it relates to ethanol production

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# Area business resource list

**Linda McCowan**  
Prairie Enterprise-  
Enterprise Project  
1300 Kansas  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
866-617-1555  
entfac@earthlink.net  
*Assists people with business  
start-ups and assistance for  
entrepreneurs.*

**Larry Meschke**  
Kansas Department of  
Commerce  
1115 E. Kansas Plaza,  
Suite C  
Garden City, KS 67846  
620-275-7643  
lmeschke@kansascom-  
merce.com  
*Facilitates use of Kansas  
Department of Commerce  
program and assistance.*

FHSU Small Business  
Development Center  
109 W. 10th Street  
Hays, KS 67601  
785-628-6786  
*Helps small business own-  
ers with numerous issues,  
including business planning,  
marketing, tax issues and  
development of business  
plans.*

**Brock McPherson**  
SCORE  
2109 12th Street  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-793-3420  
mcpmclaw@  
carrollswb.com  
*Retired executives that give  
business counseling for busi-  
ness owners and managers.*

**Golden Belt One Stop**  
1025 Main Street  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-793-8825

**Richard Sidles**  
Western Kansas  
Technology Corporation  
1910 18th

Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-793-7964  
dsidles@wktc.kscoxmail.com  
*Technical and professional  
assistance for manufacturers.*

**Julie Kramp**  
Barton County  
Community College  
245 NE 30 Road  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-792-9278  
krampj@bartoncc.edu  
*Customized training for local  
industry.*

**Patty Richardson**  
Great Plains  
Development  
PO Box 1116  
100 Military Plaza, Suite  
128  
Dodge City, KS 67801  
*Administers grants and  
loans for local governments  
and business.*

## Economic Development Directors

**Jan Peters**  
Great Bend Economic  
Development  
Great Bend Chamber of  
Commerce  
1307 Williams  
Great Bend, KS. 67530  
620-792-2401  
jpeters@greatbend.org

**Gordon Pfannenstiel**  
Economic Development  
610 Main  
Russell, KS 67665  
800-658-4686  
rced@russellks.org

**Linda Henderson**  
Pawnee County  
Economic Development  
PO Box 240  
Larned, KS 67550  
620-285-6916

# Economic Outlook

## Employment Sectors-Barton Co.

	Jan. 05	Jan. 06
Goods Producing Ind.	2,375	4,850
Service Producing Ind.	10,700	7,780
Farm	800	1,000

## Permits

	Jan. 05	Jan. 06
Commercial-GB	2	3
Residential-GB	2	13
Addition/Equip-GB	4	0
Cars-County	112	42
Trucks-County	52	25

## City/County Sales Tax Collections

	Jan. 05	Jan. 06
Sales Tax	\$398,020	\$429,433

## Barton County State Sales

### Tax Collections by Tax Month

	Oct. 04	Oct. 05
Sales Tax	\$1,519,524	\$1,567,065

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# Espinosa provides effort, money to scholarship cause

## • The Natural Alternative donates to La Oportunidad Fund at Barton

Great Bend business owner and Hispanic Advisory Council member Michael Espinosa has been instrumental in helping establish La Oportunidad Fund, a scholarship program aimed at helping Hispanic students attend Barton County Community College. He secured donations that helped establish a \$10,000 endowment for La Oportunidad Fund more than a year ago, and since then, he's gathered money from five businesses to grow an annual fund.

The purpose of the annual fund is to make scholarships available for students now while the endowment grows. This semester, the first La Oportunidad annually funded scholarships were given to three students in awards of \$500 and \$250.

"If it wasn't for Mike and his efforts, we wouldn't be getting donations to La Oportunidad Fund," said Barton Institutional Advancement Director Darnell Holopirek.

Last month, Espinosa took his commitment for supporting the cause a step further when his business, The Natural Alternative, donated \$250 to La Oportunidad Fund for an annually funded scholarship that will be awarded next fall.

"It is important that everyone in

the community helps in this effort and that includes our business," said Espinosa. "I felt that by showing that effort is there, it may encourage others to also participate."

La Oportunidad Fund provides financial-need-based scholarship assistance to Hispanic students in the community. A scholarship endowment portion of the fund was established two years ago, but La Oportunidad also raises funds and accepts donations to support annually funded scholarships. Both the endowment and annually funded award have been developed to help area Hispanic traditional and non-traditional students attend college for completion of degrees or other certificate programs.

"I don't know of any area business that doesn't benefit either directly or indirectly from the contributions of the Hispanic population in this area," said Espinosa. "Many local businesses are realizing, or have realized that the Hispanic community has a great economic impact on Barton County. We're appreciative that some businesses have chosen to recognize those contributions by giving to La Oportunidad Fund."

All businesses and people wanting to contribute to La Oportunidad Fund can call the BCCC Foundation Office, 792-9367, or e-mail the office at holopirekd@bartonccc.edu



Courtesy photo

Graciele and Michael Espinosa give a \$250 check to Barton County Community College Institutional Advancement Director Darnell Holopirek, left, for the La Oportunidad Fund. The husband and wife team own and operate The Natural Alternative, downtown Great Bend. "We pride ourselves in our business of serving the whole community," said Michael Espinosa. "We have a bilingual staff because the Hispanic population is an important part of our clientele."



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